

CRISIS MANAGEMENT AND DIGITAL PR – HOW A FOOD DELIVERY APP RECOVERED FROM A VIRAL BACKLASH ON TWITTER

Assignment Type:

Crisis communication report / PR strategy essay

Subject Focus:

Real-time response strategy, sentiment analysis, brand tone, apology language, and campaign restructuring post-crisis

1. Background

In February 2024, **QuickEats**, a fast-growing food delivery startup, faced public backlash when a viral video surfaced on X (formerly Twitter), showing a delivery executive mishandling food during a peak-time order. Within 24 hours, the brand's name trended under #QuickEatsHygieneScare, leading to negative press and mass customer complaints.

2. Timeline of Events

Time	Event
Day 0	Video goes viral (6 PM) with 100K views in 3 hours
Day 1 AM	#QuickEatsHygieneScare trends; brand silence
Day 1 Noon	CEO tweets apology, states incident under investigation
Day 1 PM	Brand publishes blog + infographics on hygiene policy
Day 2	Influencer-led campaign: "What Clean Delivery Means"
Day 3	Engagement starts to recover
Day 7	Sentiment normalized; 9% bounce-back in app installs

3. Metrics Tracked

Metric	Before Crisis	Peak Crisis	1 Week Post-Crisis
App Installs / Day	9,300	3,600	8,500
Twitter Brand Mentions	~190/day	23,000	1,200
Negative Sentiment (%)	6.4%	73.1%	12.7%
Customer Support Tickets	~800/day	9,400	1,300
Refund Rate (%)	1.8%	11.6%	2.4%

4. Communication Strategy Breakdown

Step	Tactic Used	Platform
Initial Acknowledgment	CEO personal tweet with humanized tone	Twitter (X)
Transparency	In-app banner linking to incident blog	App & Website
Reinforcement	Video from kitchen staff on hygiene process	YouTube Shorts
Empathy	Retweeting customer support replies	Twitter
Reputation Recovery	Paid collaboration with 10 clean food vloggers	Instagram

5. Sentiment Analysis Table

Sentiment	Day 0	Day 1	Day 2	Day 7
Positive	52%	9%	23%	61%
Neutral	41%	18%	34%	27%
Negative	7%	73%	43%	12%

6. Visuals Provided

- **Figure 1:** Brand mention volume spike during crisis
- **Figure 2:** Pie chart of sentiment before and after response
- **Figure 3:** Apology post engagement (likes, shares, comments)
- **Figure 4:** Campaign artwork for “What Clean Delivery Means”

7. Key Learning Points

- The **first 24 hours** of a PR crisis define brand perception
- A combination of **CEO voice, transparent updates, and community empathy** rebuilt trust
- Paid PR and influencer credibility helped **reframe the narrative**
- Tracking **customer service metrics** post-crisis is essential for internal improvement

8. Strategic Takeaways for Students

- Always **acknowledge a crisis early**, even before having full answers
- Use multiple formats: tweets, blogs, videos, and influencer voices
- Create **crisis templates** for social and support teams
- Understand the **difference between apology vs. admission of guilt**

9. Deliverables to Student

- 3,500-word crisis strategy analysis
- Sentiment analysis chart (before/during/after)
- Timeline of official brand communication
- Screenshots of influencer PR posts
- Sample apology tweet + blog article draft
- Rubric for evaluating brand tone in PR messaging